

## UNESCO INPUT

### OHCHR Report on the implementation of HCR Resolution 47/21 regarding Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Africans and Peoples of African Descent

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With reference to the Four-Point Agenda Towards Transformative Change for Racial Justice and Equality, the CI and SHS/IRD Sectors has the following contributions:

#### I. STEP UP: Stop denying and start dismantling

##### 1. Global Call against Racism

At the 40<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO's General Conference (2019), Member States adopted a resolution requesting the Director-General to "strengthen UNESCO's contribution to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance including incitement to racial hatred and racial hate crimes" ([40 C/Resolution 39](#)). This was followed in 2020 by the adoption of the UNESCO's Executive Board decision ([210 EX/Decision 5.1.B](#)) that took note of the [Global Call against Racism](#). The latter mandated UNESCO to step up its intersectoral action to combat the alarming resurgence and pervasiveness of racism and discrimination, and to develop a roadmap "to strengthen UNESCO's contribution to the fight against racism and discrimination across its fields of competence, with particular focus on anti-racism and anti-discrimination programmes and global citizenship education (GCED) programmes". Following the Board decision [212 EX/Decision 5.1.A of 2021, the Director-General shall submit at its 214<sup>th</sup> session \(April 2022\)](#). In 2021, a detailed timeframe for the implementation of UNESCO's roadmap against racism and discrimination.

The draft Roadmap (document [214 EX/5.1.A.INF](#)), has been conceived as a strategic and operational framework that will enhance UNESCO's anti-racism and anti-discrimination efforts. It is anchored in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (41 C/4) and Programme and Budget (41 C/5). The Roadmap has been informed by a series of activities implemented by UNESCO since the outset of the COVID-19 crisis. These include: 15 webinars entitled "[Inclusion in the time of COVID-19: addressing racism, discrimination and exclusion](#)", six "[Regional Expert Consultations against Racism and Discrimination](#)", the research study [COVID-19 Social and Economic Impacts in Sub-Saharan Africa](#) and the [Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination](#). These activities all paved the way for a coherent evidence base, on which the draft Roadmap was built. Moreover, to ensuring an intersectoral and gender-transformative approach, the Roadmap benefitted from contributions from all programme sectors (Education, the Social and Natural Sciences, the Culture and the Information and Communication) as well as the Organization's two global priorities, i.e. Priority Africa and Gender Equality.

As part of the Roadmap's flagship activities, UNESCO has undertaken a scanning exercise in 2021, which examined institutional, legal and informal frameworks providing good practices and successful strategies to fight racism and discrimination, including in Africa. UNESCO will organize a series of policy dialogues with Member States, including from the African region, to enrich the scanning exercise and have it serve as a repository of case examples. UNESCO has also developed an integrated anti-racism toolkit to upscale the effort to counter racism and discrimination in legal frameworks and institutions, as well as to assess the strength and

effectiveness of anti-racism policies. The toolkit will be the subject of a series of pilot workshops in all regions to enhance the regional, national and local particularities of its implementation. Conceived as inclusive spaces for dialogue and exchange, these series will involve not only decision- and policy-makers, but also researchers and experts such as UNESCO Chairs and networks, practitioners, civil society including youth and women's groups, as well as minority and underserved communities. UNESCO also aims to build on its existing intersectoral work on hate speech, which is closely linked to efforts to counter racism and discrimination. This work includes a new adaptable tool to monitor online hate speech in a variety of linguistic and cultural environments. Moreover, efforts to enhance global citizenship education will be stepped up, including the review of its normative instruments.

In the framework of the Roadmap, and in responding to the continued urgency of addressing racism and discrimination in our societies, UNESCO has launched a multi-stakeholder [Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination](#). Its first edition, held on 22 March 2021, provided the opportunity for Member States and international stakeholders across all sectors to come together to share knowledge and experience, hold expert discussions, and commit to taking concrete action to address racism. The Forum was conceived as a contribution to the International Decade for People of African Descent. Attended by over 5,000 participants, including ministers, experts and practitioners, the Forum was a unique platform in the international community to foster evidence-based dialogue where participants could share their experiences and lessons learned. The next edition will be held in November 2022 in collaboration with Mexico.

Launched by UNESCO in 2004, the [International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR](#), is being leveraged to assist local authorities in combating discrimination in their capacity as policy makers and service providers in areas as diverse as education, employment, housing provision and cultural activities. Since its inception, and its revitalization in 2014, ICCAR has grown to become an active global front against racism and discriminations with over 500 members across the globe. In addition, ICCAR has become a reference as a unique city-level platform in the UN system and in the international community.

ICCAR undertakes a wide range of initiatives including policymaking, capacity-building and awareness-raising activities. It advocates also for global solidarity and collaboration to promote inclusive urban development free from all forms of discrimination. Launched in 2006, the [Coalition of African Cities against Racism and Discrimination, one of ICCAR's regional coalitions](#), has 59 member cities. Its principal objective is to create a platform of African cities interested in sharing experiences, good practices, knowledge and expertise to improve their policies and programs to fight all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and intolerance. The Coalition also promotes inclusion and diversity in rapidly urbanizing societies, and encourages them to foster human rights values, gender equality, mutual understanding and social cohesion.

To address the Global Call against Racism, UNESCO is stepping up its efforts worldwide to build robust programmes that will contribute to the fight against racism and discrimination, as outlined below:

- [Master Class Series against Racism and Discriminations](#)

Launched by UNESCO in November 2019, the [Master Class Series against Racism and Discriminations](#) seeks to empower students to become youth champions in their own schools and communities and encourage positive change in mindsets to foster positive social transformations. UNESCO is scaling up this Series aiming to shed light on the growing significance of racial prejudice and the spread of racial discrimination and intolerance, as well as other forms of

discrimination such as gender-based prejudice, violence and discrimination, and raise the visibility on its consequences. Upon conclusion, each Series culminates with the adoption of the young participants' commitments in designing and pursuing their own local initiatives. With now 16 editions organized including with students and teachers from Africa and of African descent, plus the global edition held on 21 March 2022, UNESCO's Master Classes have empowered more than 6,000 students to become anti-racism champions in their own schools and communities. Around 97% of previous editions' attendees acknowledged that Master Classes both educated and inspired them to be more tolerant, and over 75% reported confidence in sharing these new lessons learned (experiences) with their own families and peers.

- [Handbook on welcoming cities](#)

Within the framework of ICCAR's European Regional Coalition, UNESCO develops a handbook on welcoming cities for **refugees and migrants**. The upcoming tool addresses the integration of an approach founded on inclusion and non-discrimination across all relevant areas of responsibility and corresponding policies of local authorities. Specific recommendations are being proposed in relation to each specific area. These are informed by specific city practices collected from ICCAR members, many of which are featured in the handbook to serve as source for inspiration.

## 2. Intercultural dialogue

Capacity-building activities have also been undertaken by UNESCO to promote the **development of intercultural competencies** for teachers, educators, representatives of government and civil society and community leaders. Based on the **Story Circles methodology**, presented in the Manual for Developing Intercultural Competencies, the face-to-face and online training sessions have already involved more than **800 participants** from different regions across the world, including UN staff in African countries such as Mali and Cameroun.

Evaluation results have shown that the Story Circles is especially powerful to build resilience by instilling into women and men socio-emotional skills that help bridges divides and counter racism and xenophobia against minorities. In this framework, Story Circles methodology has been used by UN staff to **fight against discrimination and unconscious bias** in the workplace and as an activity to be used in projects on the ground.

Information regarding the Story Circles methodology:

- Manual for Developing Intercultural Competencies in [English](#) (also available in French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic): <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370336>
- Webpage about the Building Resilience through the Development of Intercultural Competencies project (also available in French and Arabic): <https://en.unesco.org/themes/intercultural-dialogue/competencies>
- Promotional video of Story Circles (which will also be soon available in French, Spanish and Arabic): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUQcA-FKWgg>

## 3. Transforming *MEN'talities*

Built upon the Maputo Roadmap established at the Interregional Seminar on "Men, Masculinities and Gender Equality in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America" in 2019, UNESCO's

Transforming *MEN'talities Initiative* seeks to design context-nuanced knowledge and identify effective policies, incentives, and actions for gender-transformative change and more cohesive, resilient, and peaceful societies. It does so through the critical examination of gender norms and manifestations of masculinity and the debunking of gender stereotypes in an intersectional manner, taking into consideration the influence of biases and prejudices based on ethnicity, origins, disability, among others. UNESCO will develop a global analytical framework based on national reports, establish a coalition of high-level advocates and launch a yearly international policy conference to advance the gender equality agenda with the active engagement of men and boys. UNESCO will develop the above analytical framework together with the *MenEngage Alliance*, *Promundo-US* (USA), the *Sexual Research Violence Initiative* (South Africa) and the *White Ribbon* (Canada). Several national reports on norms of masculinity have already been developed, including one in Mozambique, and the Initiative will be implemented throughout Africa in line with UNESCO's two Global Priorities Africa and gender equality.

#### **4. Contribution to interagency networks**

UNESCO supports from the perspective of its mandate and plays a lead role in initiatives carried out by UN interagency platforms relating to inclusion and anti-discrimination. In 2021-2022, UNESCO co-leads, together with OHCHR, the **UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities**. The work involves developing joint guidance across a number of common priorities, such as promoting the leave no one behind principle, fostering intersectionality, communication and advocacy, and joint initiatives paying particular attention to the UN system's work on the ground.

#### **5. Countering Hate Speech**

UNESCO has worked on a project to monitor online hate speech together with the Oxford Internet Institute (United Kingdom). The project was undertaken within the framework of the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech with funds of the European Union (EU). It aims to identify gaps in global capacities to monitor and detect trends in hate speech while also piloting a new, adaptable keyword methodology to monitor trends of such content on social media, knowing that the majority of existing research and monitoring tools focus on the United States of America and Europe as well as on monolingual environments. As part of this project, an initial discussion paper, "[Addressing hate speech on social media: Contemporary challenges](#)", was published by UNESCO and the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG). The paper was issued prior to the Global Education Ministers Conference on Addressing Hate Speech through Education and its preparatory Multistakeholder Forum organized by UNESCO in September and October 2021. An expanded study will be published in 2022 to inform policymaking and actions to curb hate speech while protecting the right to freedom of expression.

#### **6. General History of Africa Project**

UNESCO encourages the integration of modules on the [General History of Africa \(GHA\)](#) in training academies of law enforcement institutions. This initiative is part of the UNESCO's General History of Africa project, launched in 1964 to remedy the **lack of knowledge on Africa's history**. It is meant to promote an African perspective of the continent through writing its own history, freed from racial prejudices that are rooted in slave trade and colonization. This initiative could contribute to dismantling racial prejudice within law enforcement institutions.

## 7. Media Information Literacy

UNESCO's programme on *Media Information Literacy (MIL)* contributes to foster critical thinking in the access, use, sharing and interaction with information and media. UNESCO will continue to bolster **media education that fosters critical thinking** and an informed approach to interaction with information and content, including with regard to identifying and understanding the presence, characteristics and impact of both racism and anti-racism in information and media content.

### II. PURSUE JUSTICE: End impunity and build trust

In November 2021, UNESCO Member States adopted the first ever-global agreement on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (AI). This historical text defines the common values and principles, which will guide the construction of the necessary legal infrastructure to ensure the healthy development of AI. AI is pervasive, and besides enabling many of our daily routines - booking flights, steering driverless cars, and personalising our morning news feeds, it supports the decision-making of governments and the private sector. AI technologies are delivering remarkable results in highly specialized fields such as cancer screening and building inclusive environments for people with disabilities. They also help combat global challenges like climate change and world hunger, and help reduce poverty by optimizing economic aid.

Nevertheless, the technology is also bringing new unprecedented challenges. We see increased gender and ethnic bias, significant threats to privacy, dignity and agency, dangers of mass surveillance, and increased use of unreliable AI technologies in law enforcement, to name a few. Until now, there were no universal standards to provide an answer to these issues. There is a strong call in the Recommendation to support the developing and low-income countries to advance ethical AI and to leverage its positive impact. Countries with strong development cooperation programs are encouraged to consider the implementation of the Recommendation into their priorities, so that the instrument ensures progress in AI uptake in all UNESCO's regions. This requires financial and intellectual support, and further, a roster of experts can be established to provide assistance for such states, in the format of "AI Experts without borders".

Persons of African descent are also concerned by the way social media companies portray information and moderate content. According to the [UNESCO's high-level principles on transparency for internet companies \(2021\)](#), these companies should put in measures for due diligence and redress, including against discrimination. These principles include transparency into processes that enable people to raise concerns about content (including that which appears to violate human rights or incites violence); whether the company conducts risk assessments, including in contexts such as elections or countries in conflict; whether they have risk assessments of algorithms that may discriminate against people unfairly; and whether they publish guidelines on how they will develop ethical AI processes which may impact on human rights.

The following principles relate to the above-mentioned point directly:

- Companies should be transparent as to whether they have processes to enable people to raise concerns about content, including that which appears to violate human rights or advocates incitement to violence, hostility or discrimination, as well as inaccurate content;



and they should be transparent about implementation of such processes in terms of numbers and types of complaints and actions taken;

- Companies should be transparent about whether they conduct risk assessments for their operations, such as in contexts of upcoming elections or in countries in conflict, highlighting any serious potential threats to freedom of expression, privacy and other human rights, as well as their proposals for mitigating those threats;
- Companies should disclose if they have risk assessments of any algorithms whose application can have the potential to discriminate against people unfairly, and if there are any proposed mitigation measures;
- Companies should publish guidelines for how they will develop ethical AI processes, which make consequential decisions that can impact on human rights.

In March 2022, UNESCO launched a new [Massive Open Online Course \(MOOC\) on AI and the Rule of Law](#), developed in cooperation with The Future Society, and with the support of Cetic.br|NIC.br, the National Judicial College, and IEEE SA. The MOOC is an introductory course engaging judicial operators in a global and timely discussion around AI's application and impact on the rule of law. Structured around six modules, and available in all six UN languages as well as Portuguese, it unpacks the opportunities and risks of the increasing adoption of AI technologies across justice systems and AI's impact for the administration of justice, particularly concerning human rights and AI ethics and governance issues (including how to address and prevent discrimination and bias). The modules are:

- An Introduction to Why Digital Transformation and AI Matter for Justice Systems;
- AI Adoption Across Justice Systems ;
- The Rise of Online Courts ;
- Algorithmic Bias and its Implications for Judicial Decision Making;
- Safeguarding Human Rights in the Age of AI;
- AI Ethics & Governance Concerning Judicial Operators.

As at 15 March 2022, 3957 judicial operators had registered to take the course.

### III. LISTEN UP: People of African descent must be heard

Regarding para 4 under this section: "*Protect the safety and rights of organisers, participants, observers and journalists in protests with particular attention to members of groups that are or have been subjected to racial discrimination*". UNESCO briefs on "[Safety of journalists covering protests: preserving freedom of the press during times of turmoil](#)" (2020) and "[Safety of journalists covering protests: preserving freedom of the press during times of turmoil: Regional highlights, July - December 2020](#)" (2021) highlight how journalists, in general, have a critical role in reporting and informing audiences on protest movements. Hundreds of journalists around the world trying to cover protests have been harassed, beaten, intimidated, arrested, put under surveillance, abducted, and had their equipment damaged.

- Waves of Black Lives Matter protests following the killing of George Floyd in the United States of America have underscored the unique burdens carried by black journalists and journalists of color and the discrimination that they face in the exercise of their profession. An example was the arrest of an Afro-Latino CNN reporter, who was live on air while his white colleagues were allowed to continue reporting, and who stated they had been treated "much differently". The figures in the aforementioned UNESCO reports show that much more efforts are needed to ensure the effective

participation and/or representation of people of African descent, in particular women and youth, at every level in State institutions, including law enforcement and the criminal justice system, and policy-making processes.

- Finally, additional training is needed to strengthen the capacities and knowledge of law enforcement officers on international standards on freedom of expression and the safety of journalists with related intersectional angles in order to ensure the respect of the rule of law and fundamental freedoms. To this end, over 23,000 judicial actors (including judges, prosecutors and lawyers) and 8,500 law enforcement officers and security forces from around the world have been trained on these issues since 2013, through *UNESCO's Judges Initiative*.

#### IV. REDRESS: Confront past legacies, take special measures and deliver reparatory justice

##### UNESCO Slave Route Project

UNESCO through its **Slave Route Project**, which was created in 1994, has been working to promote a better research and knowledge on the history of slave trade and slavery. Advised by its international scientific committee made of 20 members (scholars, artists, civil society activists, media specialists), the Project also aims to make a link between the past and the present, namely to understand the root causes of discrimination and racism, and to promote sites of memory through the Slave Route Label.

The activities developed below by the Slave Route Project take a part in the fight for racial justice and equality:

- Study on the macroeconomic cost of racism

The Slave Route Project believes that the narrative regarding racial inequality must also be thought of in terms of economic loss, not only for those discriminated against but for societies as a whole. To that extent, UNESCO is developing a series of studies with Professor Anthony Bogues (Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice - Brown University), Professor Kako Nubukpo (Togolese economist; Commissioner at the West African Economic and Monetary Union) and Professor Synthia Santana (Economist -Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), to measure the financial losses that a country faces when people are excluded from legal and health services, housing, employment and education. The ultimate goal is to inform the design and implementation of inclusive policies to address this issue of racial inequality. The first case study will be carried out in Brazil to be followed by other regions and countries in order to have a global perspective.

- Healing project

The healing project, developed in collaboration with the Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace (GHFP), aims to **stop the transmission of transgenerational trauma** linked to the history of slavery. Scientists have found that traumas can be passed through generations, preventing individuals from achieving their full potential. Following the establishment of the Global Humanity for Peace Institute at Wales University, master and PhD programmes will contribute to understand the mechanisms of transgenerational traumas and paths to healing.

- Bintou & Issa series & other projects

To build a society where racial justice and equality become a reality for all, young women and men have to be involved as they will build tomorrow's society and dismantle the racist structures that were inherited from the history of slavery. To that extent, the book series *Bintou & Issa*, co-edited with the Moroccan publishing company *Langages du Sud*, aims to address the suffering and resilience of the enslaved people through their resistance and economic and cultural contributions to the contemporary world.

UNESCO is committed to raising global awareness of the need to safeguard and promote access to documentary heritage, especially that which highlights the struggle for human rights and dignity. UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme including through its International Register, aims to "facilitate preservation, by the most appropriate techniques, of the world's documentary heritage"; "assist universal access to documentary heritage" and "increase awareness worldwide of the existence and significance of documentary heritage".

As an example, the "[Slave Trade Archives Project](#)" was launched in 1999, following the launch of the Slave Route Project in 1994. The project aimed at improving access to, and safeguarding of, original documents related to the transatlantic slave trade and slavery throughout the world, and enhancing access to knowledge and use of slave trade records.

A key feature of this project was digitization of these sources, particularly those at risk from deterioration. The Programme has continued to draw attention to the historical significance of this collective memory of human history by inscribing on its International Register such records as:

- Benin's Colonial Archives (1997)
- South Africa's Liberation Struggle Living Archive Collection (2007)
- Dutch West India Company (*Westindische Compagnie*) Archives by the Netherlands, Brazil, Ghana, Guyana, Netherlands Antilles, Suriname, United Kingdom and United States of America (2011).
- The Abolition of Slavery in Tunisia 1841-1846 by Tunisia (2017).

The project constitutes a good practice demonstrating the importance of documentary heritage and its access for enabling and reinforcing historical, shared narratives that can help inform constructive and effective solutions to current issues.